

**Board of Selectmen – June 20, 2011**

**Present: Babson, Tsagaris, Searle, Gibbs, Dugan**

**Also present: Larsen, Connolly, Ketchen, Robinson**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Warrants approved: 2011-053 (\$10,489,627.89) and 2011-054 (\$65,822.04)

**1. Executive Director's Update**

The Board voted to approve the minutes for the June 6 and June 13, 2011 meetings of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Larsen briefly reviewed the results of a short study performed by the Beta Group regarding potential changes to the signal timing at the intersection of Washington and State Streets. The study indicates a leading signal phase for westbound Washington Street traffic is clearly warranted. This item will likely be addressed at the Board's meeting in July.

Jeff Peterson, Deputy Fire Chief, and Rob Shupe and Michael Eby, representing the Permanent Building Committee joined the Board and Mr. Ketchen reviewed the request for a supplemental appropriation from the Town Facilities Maintenance Account to fund incremental costs related to the Fire Station #1 floor repair. A supplemental appropriation was made necessary as a result of new bids received following a successful protest against the prior bid award. Mr. Eby and Mr. Shupe explained the circumstances of the bid protest, the rationale for completing the floor repair and related HVAC systems work at the same time, and the need to proceed with the work this summer.

The Board voted (5-0) to approve the use of an amount not to exceed \$90,173 for the purposes of designing, engineering, construction and other related services in connection with the repair and reconstruction of the Central Street Fire Station apparatus floor and heating system and, further, that said amount may be transferred from the Town Facilities Maintenance Account appropriated under Article 16 of the 2009 Annual Town Meeting.

**2. Appeal of NRC Tree Decision – 144 Weston Road**

Ms. Babson opened the hearing and turned the meeting over to Mr. Dugan. Mr. Dugan summarized the Board's role with respect to Michael Cave's appeal regarding the Natural Resource Commission's decision to remove a tree at his property at 144 Weston Road.

Neal Seaborn, Chair of the Natural Resources Commission, and Kent Warren, Town Arborist, joined the Board. Mr. Seaborn and Mr. Warren made a presentation regarding the poor condition of the tree and the need to remove it, in order to provide for public safety. In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Warren confirmed the Town's willingness to plant a replacement tree and indicated he did not believe the recent Weston Road rehabilitation project significantly damaged the root structure.

Mr. Cave explained his rationale for saving the tree and read portions of an e-mail he received from an arborist (aka "Damien") he contacted. Based on this e-mail, Mr. Cave inferred that Damien is reluctant to help preserve the tree because he has been unduly influenced by his desire to maintain a good working relationship with the Town arborist. Mr. Robinson noted that any Town employee who is to be criticized has the right to be present and respond to the criticism leveled against him. Also, any arborist faces the personal challenge of trying to be responsive to a client's wishes, while maintaining a good working relationship with the town.

Members of the Board noted they respect Mr. Cave's wishes, but also are mindful of the very substantial efforts by the Natural Resources Commission and Town Arborist to preserve trees. They also encouraged Mr. Cave to take advantage of the Town's willingness to plant a replacement tree.

The Board voted (5-0) to approve the removal of the 26 inch Norway Maple located at 144 Weston Road in accordance with Chapter 87, Section 4 of the General Laws and the decision rendered by the Natural Resources Commission at its public hearing on May 16, 2011.

### **3. Traffic Regulation Amendments**

Ms. Babson reopened the Public Hearing regarding Traffic Regulation amendments related to the 27 Washington Street project, specifically the proposed elimination of one of six existing parking spaces on the south side of Washington Street in front of Dunkin Donuts. Kien Ho from the Beta Group to join the Board.

Mr. Larsen summarized the roadway changes in the Lower Falls area, which include the planned elimination of the parking space and the lengthening of the five remaining spaces to 22 feet. He noted these changes were being made based on the recommendation of Conley Associates (traffic consultant for National Development) and the Beta Group (the Town's traffic consultant). He also noted the recommendations are largely driven by concerns regarding pedestrian safety in the area.

Mr. Ho noted this is an area of high traffic and pedestrian volume and striking a balance between traffic efficiency and pedestrian safety is the principal challenge underlying the traffic recommendations. In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Ho noted approximately 10 cars make a left turn into One Washington during the peak hour, and 22' is not sufficient for cars to reliably pull into the parking spaces without backing up. Ms. Babson noted the elimination of the 6<sup>th</sup> parking space is one element of the prior PSI decision, and questioned the need for proceeding with the elimination now. Mr. Larsen noted the overall roadway work will be done this summer, and the logical time to eliminate the space is when the developer repaves and restripes the area. Mr. Larsen reviewed the net change in the number of parking spaces as a result of the planned roadway work.

Dennis Brown and Bill Roberts joined the Board and Mr. Brown summarized their objection to the elimination of the on-street parking spot in front of Dunkin Donuts, as summarized in a note sent to the Selectmen earlier in the day. In their opinion the elimination of the parking space harms local merchants and the data and analysis (e.g., the frequency of left turns into One Washington) does not support the elimination of the space.

The Board discussed the merits of deferring elimination of the parking space pending evaluation of the traffic impact of the project, which is planned for six months following completion of the project.

The Board voted (5-0) to delay elimination of one parking spot in front of Dunkin Donuts at this time, but relook at the elimination of the space six months after completion of the project, following the reevaluation of traffic at that time.

### **4. Public Transportation Working Group**

Michael Zehner, Frank DiMasi and Molly Fairchild, members of the Public Transportation Working Group joined the Board and Ms. Gibbs presented an overview of the Group's work to-date, including:

- The Working Group's mission, goals and objectives
- The Town's public transportation policy goals
- Reasons why the Town should move forward on public transportation issues at this time
- Components of the Public Transportation Study

Ms. Gibbs, Mr. Zehner and Mr. Ketchen summarized the preliminary results including:

- Central Transportation Planning Services' (CTPS) inventory and assessment of existing public transportation
- Other survey results
- Analysis of how other communities support public transportation
- Principle findings and an analysis of implementation alternatives

The Board questioned the net cost impact if the Town were to join the Metrowest Regional Transportation Authority (MWRTA).

Ms. Gibbs also summarized the Group's anticipated recommendations, specifically to:

- Join the MWRTA;and,
- Establish a permanent committee on public transportation

Mr. DeMasi summarized the origins of the MWRTA and the inherent benefit of Wellesley becoming involved with the MWRTA.

Ms. Gibbs noted the Working Group's final report will be submitted in the near future.

### **Projects and Other Updates**

- Wellesley High School - none
- Senior Center - none
- Advisory Committee Update - none
- Fuller Brook Park - none
- Public Transportation – see above
- Sustainability – Mr. Ketchen noted the Committee will have a FY12 work plan to share with the Board shortly.
- Wellesley Square initiative – Ms. Searle noted the group will be meeting this Thursday.

At 10:03 the meeting was adjourned.